



DEP NEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

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CONTACT:

Ed Coletta 617-292-5737

SIX SUPERMARKET CHAINS HONORED WITH 'WASTEWISE AWARDS' FOR LEADERSHIP IN RECYCLING FOOD AND PACKAGING WASTES

Massachusetts and federal environmental officials honored six supermarket chains today for their leadership in composting food wastes instead of throwing them away, and for aggressively recycling a range of materials, including bottles, cans, cardboard, shrink wrap and stretch wrap.

Receiving Massachusetts WasteWise Supermarket Recycling Leadership Awards were Big Y Foods, Hannaford Bros., Roche Bros., Shaw's Supermarkets, Stop & Shop Supermarkets, and Whole Foods Market. The awards were presented at a meeting of the Massachusetts Food Association (MFA), a supermarket industry group.

"The Environmental Protection Agency is pleased to support Massachusetts and the supermarket industry in finding ways to reduce the disposal of food waste and other recyclable materials that would otherwise clog our landfills or require incineration," said Ira Leighton, deputy regional administrator of EPA's New England Office. "Through the actions of these supermarkets, as well as others, we will be able to meet our national goal of a 35 percent recycling rate by 2008."

"Composting and recycling benefit both the environment and the supermarket industry's bottom line," said state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Commissioner Robert W. Golledge Jr. "Now we want to make these practices the norm rather than the exception at supermarkets across Massachusetts."

Forty-five participating Massachusetts supermarkets are currently diverting approximately 6,600 tons of organics and 21,000 tons of cardboard and other recyclables from disposal facilities each year. This translates to an annual disposal cost savings of approximately \$7,000 per store. These savings are particularly impressive when put in the context of the razor-thin profit margins in the supermarket industry. To generate \$10,000 to \$20,000 of profit, a supermarket would need to sell \$1-\$2 million of product. Some supermarkets have saved as much as \$20,000 annually.

"While those may be impressive figures, they are only the beginning," said MFA President Chris Flynn. "The industry could realize more than \$4 million in savings per year if all 400 supermarkets in Massachusetts recycled their organics."

The WasteWise Awards, sponsored by DEP and EPA, are given to companies that demonstrate recycling leadership, sustainability and innovation. The two agencies jointly fund the Massachusetts WasteWise Program, which provides waste reduction assistance to businesses and organizations. Participation is voluntary.

"We are also looking to partner with other business sectors to think environmentally and benefit economically," DEP Commissioner Golledge added. Other sectors DEP is interested in partnering with include food processors, restaurants and the healthcare industry.

The Department of Environmental Protection is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.



L-R, Bob Golledge, MA DEP; Arthur Ackles, Roche Bros.; Lee Kane, Whole Foods; Scott LeClair, Hannaford Bros.; Tom Furillo, Shaw's; Dave Brunelle, Big Y; Kristina Stefanski, Stop & Shop; Ira Leighton, US EPA.